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ARIZONA BANS ETHNIC STUDIES:

The Republican-dominated Arizona legislature has passed a bill that will end ethnic studies classes in the state. The bill bans classes that “promote resentment toward a race or class of people,” “are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group” or “advocate ethnic solidarity instead of treating pupils as individuals.” Also prohibited: all those classes that “promote the overthrow of the US government.” The legislation applies to public and charter schools, K-12. The bill’s author, **Tom Horne**, state superintendent of public instruction, is seeking the Republican nomination for state attorney general.

State Senator **Linda Lopez**, a Democrat from Tucson, who opposed the bill, suggested that it would prohibit teaching about September 11 because that would promote hatred of Muslims. Supporters of the bill somehow rejected that argument. Fox News reported the good news that the bill “does not prohibit the teaching of the Holocaust.”

The bill, coming on the heels of Arizona’s new immigration law, which authorizes police to demand proof of legal immigration status from anyone in the state, will further help Democrats recruit Latino support, especially for Senators **Barbara Boxer** in California and **Harry Reid** in Nevada, both facing re-election challenges in November. Since 1994, when California voters passed the anti-immigrant **Proposition 187**, Latinos have voted Democratic in overwhelming numbers.

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated across the country on May 1 against Arizona’s anti-immigrant legislation. Protesters in seventy cities, including Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas and Washington, chanted, “Shame, shame, Arizona,” and carried signs declaring, **TODOS SOMOS ARIZONA—“We Are All Arizona.”**

The ethnic studies bill has been sent to Governor **Jan Brewer** for her signature. She must act on it by May 11. JON WIENER

HOPE IN ARKANSAS: Arkansas is the only state in the former Confederacy that has never elected an African-American to Congress or a statewide office. **Joyce Elliott**

hopes to change that shameful history.

Elliott, a state senator from Little Rock, is running for the 2nd Congressional District seat vacated by Democrat **Vic Snyder**, who is retiring. Arkansas is a prime battleground this year, with a heated Senate primary [see “What’s Right With Arkansas?” on page 11] and three open Congressional seats. The Senate race has rightly attracted national attention, but so too should Elliott’s bid for Congress.

Elliott grew up in the dirt-poor town of Willisville, population 188, and was the first to integrate her local high school in rural southwest Arkansas. “That was ugly,” she told me in Little Rock. “There were no soldiers, no cameras.” She paid her way through college, taught high school English for thirty-one years and became a leader with the **American Federation of Teachers** before joining the state legislature in 2000.

There, she’s been an outspoken progressive, introducing legislation to protect vulnerable minority groups from hate crimes and to allow undocumented immigrants who graduate from high school to be eligible for college scholarships. She knows these controversial stands will be used against her, along with her race. “There are people who are absolutely convinced that it’s impossible for me to win because I’m an African-American,” she says. “That’s based on our history.” But, she points out, **Barack Obama** faced many of the same doubts before becoming president. ARI BERMAN

THE FCC WILL LET IT BE: The *Washington Post* reported on May 3 that the **FCC** and its chair, **Julius Genachowski**, are unlikely to reassert their regulatory power over Internet service providers (ISPs). FCC inaction would in effect end the push for “net neutrality,” the principle of nondiscrimination against online speech. When and how our messages travel—even what they say—are up to companies like Comcast and AT&T.

The question is whether the Internet is a public infrastructure or the private property of ISPs. Through a declaratory process known as reclassification, the FCC could realign Internet policy with the common-sense understanding that ISPs should not decide what consumers may send or receive. But the FCC’s failure to assert its regulatory

role leaves us subject to the profit motives or political whims of service providers.

It may seem extreme to think that corporate behemoths like **Comcast** would read our Internet communications, block certain messages and insert their own messages disguised in our voice. Yet such “packet forging” is precisely what Comcast admitted to in a case that was ultimately decided in April by the DC Circuit Court. The FCC had moved to halt the practice. Comcast sued, challenging the agency’s authority to stop it—and won.

Without net neutrality, companies like **AT&T** can edit our communications over their wires, similar to the way they censored a 2007 performance by **Pearl Jam**, cutting from the webcast lead singer **Eddie Vedder**’s admonition to President **George W. Bush** to “find yourself another home.” The company at first called it a “mistake,” then acknowledged that it made a “handful” of similar, surreptitious edits to previous performances by other bands. While unethical, these practices now appear to be perfectly legal—and will continue to be so unless the FCC reasserts its authority. DEEPA FERNANDES

RAZING ARIZONA: Immediate opposition to Arizona’s immigration law is spreading from local legislatures to sport venues.

The city councils of **Tucson** and **Flagstaff** voted to sue the state over the law, citing enforcement costs and negative effects on tourism.

While the **Arizona Diamondbacks** and their Republican owner **Ken Kendrick** are booed across the country, the **Phoenix Suns** announced they would wear special “Los Suns” jerseys for their playoff game on Cinco de Mayo. Their opponent, the **San Antonio Spurs**, welcomed the gesture, as did the NBA players union.

The MLB’s **Players Association** has condemned the law, mulling “additional steps necessary to protect the rights and interests of our members.” High-profile figures like **San Diego Padres** first baseman **Adrián González** and **Chicago White Sox** manager **Ozzie Guillén** are threatening to boycott next year’s All Star Game in Phoenix. Twenty-seven percent of the MLB’s 833 players are Latinos and 28 percent were born outside the United States. FREDERICK DEKNATEL